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AUTHOR Mohamed, Othman
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ABSTRACT

The composite systematic functional objective career exploration program model integrates various career development theoretical approaches. These approaches emphasize self-concept, life values, personality, the environment, and academic achievement and training as separate functions in explaining career development. Current social development in Malaysia emphasizes a philosophical thinking to formulate a society that is caring, besides being able to meet the challenges in the year 2000. The implication for the profession is obvious. Changing attitudes, incorporating good moral values, and challenges in meeting a social system with high technology usage requires a competent counselor. Career counselors must be prepared to incorporate their skills with the new thinking in order to achieve the expected integrated goals. Self-awareness in the composite systematic functional objective career development model is acquired through a pragmatic approach. For example, when the core emphasis utilized personality and the environment, other activities incorporating self-concept and trait and factor are integrated as supporting elements. The management by objective career development exploration system forms the foundation of the implementation program for the model. (Four stages of implementation are considered: (1) Stage 1: Definition of objective; (2) Stage 2: Program activities; (3) Stage 3: Budget control; and (4) Stage 4: Evaluation of the management system. (ABL)

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Career Exploration Program:

A Composite Systematic Functional Objective Model

by

Othman Mohamed

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Othman Mohamed, Ph.D. is Co-ordinator of the Guidance and Counseling Unit, Faculty of Educational Studies, Universiti Pertanian Malaysia, Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia.

Running Head: CAREER EXPLORATION MODEL

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Abstract

The composite systematic functional objective career exploration program model integrates various career development theoretical approaches. These approaches emphasize self concept, life values, personality, the environment, and academic achievement and training as separate functions in explaining career development. Self awareness in the composite systematic functional objective career development model is acquired through a pragmatic approach. For example, when the core emphasis utilized personality and the environment, other activities incorporating self concept and trait and factor are integrated as the supporting elements. The management by objective career development exploration system forms the foundation of the implementation program for the model. Four stages of implementation are considered 1) Stage 1: Definition of objective; 2) Stage 2: Program activities; 3) Stage 3: Budget control; 4) Stage 4: Evaluation of the management system.

Introduction

The implementation of a career exploration program is based on a model that is comprehensive. Also, the model would incorporate theoretical concepts on career development as well as theoretical concepts pertaining on program management implementation. Therefore, a career development program must be able to provide an effective long range continuity.

Current social development in Malaysia emphasizes a philosophical thinking to formulate a society that is caring, besides being able to meet the challenges in the year 2000. The implication on the profession is obvious. Changing attitudes, incorporating good moral values; challenges in meeting a social system with high technology usage requires a competent counselor. Career counselors must be prepared to incorporate their skills with the new thinking in order to achieve the expected integrated goals.

The composite systematic functional objective career exploration program model is an evolution of an earlier program implementation, A Career Program

System--A Management by Objective Approach (Othman Mohamed, 1980).

Theoretical foundations

The implementation of a career program must be based on strong theoretical concepts. The implementation of a program that is void of theory would result in ineffective and vague objectives. A program that do not have an accurate objective would fail to define the results that it seeks to achieve. By implication, the resulting activity may not be able to provide the optimal benefits for the client that would receive the service.

Career development is not restricted to vocational choice. Currently, the thinking and understanding regarding career development incorporate all aspects making it a lifelong process (Walz & Benjamin, 1984). Gysbers (1984), indicated that the lifelong career development concept visualize a unique person with their own lifestyle. The expansion of this concept incorporates the individual as a worker, a student, member of the family and a citizen. These roles

involves the individual in an environment which is specific such as at the place of work, an educational institution, at the place of residence and in society itself. Also, the role played by the individual in each environment is closely related with events that are specific, such as begining of a job position, promotion, retirement, marriage and starting a family (Gysbers, 1984). Moreover, there is a direct relationship of the concept with incorporating career awareness, methods of making a decision on career choice, knowledge regarding lifeskills, expanding knowledge for self development, and an understanding on appropriate leisure for the self (Walz & Benjamin, 1984).

Contemporary career theories focus on four approaches 1) emphasis on self concept; 2) emphasis on sociology; 3) trait and factor; 4) and emphasis on personality (Osipow, 1973). Each of these approaches has its own strengths and limitations. However, counselors usually emphasize on the effectiveness of the result of the program being implemented.

The pragmatic method. The composite systematic functional objective career exploration program model considers aspects of awareness in regard self concept, life values, personality, the environment, and academic achievement and training. The self awareness characteristic is present in each theoretical approaches listed by Osipow (1973). However, the implementation emphasis is pragmatic. In the sense, when one approach is utilized as a core, selected characteristics from the other three theoretical approaches are used as support.

As an example, the implementation of a career exploration that emphasizes on the personality approach according to Holland (Osipow, 1973) would utilize supportive activities characteristic of aspects on self concept proposed by Ginzberg, Super (Osipow, 1973). Also, as a supplement it would utilize the trait and factor interest awareness activities (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 about here

In implementing the composite systematic functional objective model, each self awareness characteristic is related with one another. Such an arrangement provides meaning toward the concept of integration in the choice of a specific theory. Also, the arrangement guarantees the use of the strength of other theories.

Theoretical management foundation

The strategy of implementing a career exploration program requires a management method that is systematic and orderly. The definition regarding the achievable result forms the crux in the management by objective career development exploration system (Othman Mohamed, 1980). Also, the composite systematic functional objective model requires a definition regarding the achievable result from its implementation activities. As a model that is comprehensive, it requires a sequence of programs based on an evaluation and needs analysis suitable for the specific organization. The programs being planned, must have the capacity to meet current and future challenges. In this regard, the

planned program must be able to meet the response of a changing period, whilst at the same time not being too static and can be subjected for evaluation to determine its effectiveness (Walz & Benjamin, 1984).

As a management system, the small sequence of programs being planned must be related with one another. Also, each small programs must have its own objectives and specific functions. Its implementation must have the continuity for the other small programs. In other words, each small program is not planned in isolation. Also, the relationship of the activities being planned is consistent with the career maturity of the client receiving the career exploration program. Overall, each small program with their activities would move toward achieving a unitary main objective.

Designing the program implementation strategy

The identification of the achievable main objective would be the main task of the career counselor who plans to implement this career exploration model. The main objective does not crystalize in a vacuum. All preparations for the

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launching of the program form the primary flow in the management of the Composite Systematic Functional Objective model.

Needs analysis study. There is a need to compile data on information that may assist in the launching of the program. The compilation of data must be made in an orderly and scientific manner. In other words, the required data need to be collected through a needs analysis study of the specific organization where the career exploration service is to be implemented. Also, as a minimum measure, a systematic observation could be made in the organization with the purpose to identify among others, the strength and weakness that is inherent in the specific organization. For example, the counseling availability; pattern of administration and cooperation between personnel; potential clients' needs; teachers' needs or personnel needs within the specific organization.

Management on the development of program needs

During the management of the needs analysis study for the career development exploration program,

the counselor must consider the influences that would determine the success of the planned action. A resilient and successful program is responsive toward the need of the targeted group. Also, it would harness the awareness of the personnel in the organization in regard the career services, and most important being able to work as a group.

Identification of the career program needs. The career exploration program must be consistent with the clients' maturity development. The development aspects are divided into three phases when the targeted groups are students. These phases are a) middle childhood phase; b) adolescence phase; c) early adulthood phase. It is proposed that all understanding regarding personal needs during each phase is focused on the positive aspects. Actions toward the upliftment of the positive aspects are emphasized. Program activities that placed emphasis on issues related with the weaknesses of the client are reduced.

Activities that are related with the positive self are more readily acceptable by the client. The

movement toward the internal positive aspects of the client provides reinforcement in the client's confidence. This is not intended that the client's weaknesses are not emphasized. However, the emphasis is reduced, in order that exploration regarding career related issues that is positive for the client are made more obvious.

Usage of instruments as guidance tools. It is encouraged that counselors uses survey inventories in order to identify clusters that are related with career exploration needs. The Mooney Problem Checklist Inventory, for example, could help identify aspects such as 1) health and physical development; 2) finance, life situations, work; 3) leisure and social; 4) social-psychological relationship; 5) personal -psychological relationship; 6) love, sex and marriage; 7) family and marital; 8) moral and religiosity; 9) adaptability toward school work; 10) the future: vocation and education; 11) curriculum and teaching. Personality and interest inventories, such as those constructed by Holland (1985), Othman Mohamed (1977,

1991), Sidek Mohd Noah (1991), emphasizes on the exploration of interest and personality. The Minnesota Counseling Inventory helps in the identification of characteristics related with social adaptation; emotion; family adaptation; methods of adaptation.

Inventory interpretation. The inventory is used as an instrument to assist in the identification of certain characteristic aspect related with career development. Interpretation skills related with specific inventory is important in order to produce results that is not inconsistent with the client's emotional development. Counseling ethics in regard the usage of inventories must be adhered to. This arrangement is based on the principle that only counselors who are trained in the interpretation of the specific inventory is qualified to make the interpretation (AACD, 1987; PERKAMA, 1991).

Take off point regarding career awareness program. Holis and Holis (in Peters & Shertzer, 1974), provided a guideline on the take off point regarding the career awareness program. It is based on the concept that the

awareness program is in cyclical stages. The initial take off point is not static. The initiation of a program is in fact based on the readiness of the counseling service in each organization. The initial take off point is based on the extent the counseling service is involved in meeting the following needs a) information service; b) the testing service; c) the counseling service; d) the placement service; e) the follow up service; f) the research service; g) the evaluation service (see Figure 2).

Figure 2 about here

In this manner, there is flexibility in the management of the existing counseling service in an organization. For example, an organization may begin a program with a testing service if the result of the needs analysis indicated the necessity of such a program. Also, the serving counselor has been trained to interpret the specific inventory which has been proposed to be utilized. Also, based on each

organization counseling service needs, the point of initializing the take off point varies accordingly.

In regard the determination of the point of take off for the management of the program, it is useful to prepare a questionnaire that is able to help determine the stage of awareness regarding the career counseling facilities within the specific organization. The Student Inventory of Guidance Awareness (Wysong, in Peters & Shertzer, 1974), is an inventory that could be used for this purpose.

Teamwork effort. Working as a team would ensure the effective implementation of the planned program for the benefit of the targeted group. Also, the proposal contemplates the formation of an action group on career exploration program. A pragmatic leadership consistent with the corporate culture of the organization would ensure the support of the organization's management. The most important part is to translate the abstract idea into a program implementation that is operational.

Basic information is necessary in order that the counselor is able to plan specific levels for the

program implementation. Each of the smaller program with its various activities and specific objective moves as an integrated unit simulteneously toward the main unitary objective. Four levels of implementation stages has been identified in order to provide the flexibility of administration, budget control, and the learning process of the counselor (Othman Mohamed, 1980).

Implementation stage

Stage 1 DEFINITION OF OBJECTIVE

a) Understanding and the acceptance of concepts by all personnel involved in the career exploration program.

Stage 2 PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

a) Brainstorming in regard the activities toward achieving the objective.

b) Identification of personnel and media sources.

c) Expected role of the counselor.

d) Feedback from the personnel involved in the program.

e) Budgeting

Stage 3 BUDGET CONTROL

a) Projection of the budget.

b) Actual implementation cost.

c) Evaluative feedback.

Stage 4 EVALUATION OF THE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

a) Follow up studies regarding satisfaction.

b) Follow up studies regarding the suitability of the program.

c) Evaluation regarding the services rendered by the program.

d) Data bank.

Take off stage

The take off stage or stage 1 provides an opportunity for the counselor to define intensively the objective of the program. This stage requires that the counselor possess immense imagination, is creative, with the purpose of determining a specific objective

within the scope of the composite functional objective system (see Figure 3).

Figure 3 about here

Integration and concept consolidation stage

The integration and consolidation stage or stage 2 is the consequence of the actions undertaken through the implementation of objectives identified during stage 1 (see Figure 4). In this stage, the creativity of the counselor would be fully tested. The counselor is encouraged to formulate specific activities and at the same time upgrade present activities. Weekly informal discussion is necessary between all parties involved in the career exploration program. The intention is to obtain information that can be used as a source to evaluate the formulation of new programs. Also, this is a learning stage for the counselor in identifying strengths and limitations in skills related with the implementation of specific activities (Othman Mohamed, 1980).

The decision in implementing an activity should be made after a brainstorming session. A collective consensus and collaborative work by all personnel involved would ensure an effective and smooth implementation of the career program. Also at this stage, counselors who are involved must understand their role and the importance of feedback regarding the activities implemented. Besides understanding their own self awareness, counselors must collaborate with the resource personnel identified toward the implementation of the activities.

Figure 4 about here

Budget control stage

The budget control stage or stage 3 is an important part of project planning. Also, the career exploration program based on the composite functional objective model requires an effective budget control. Consideration must be emphasized that activities has to be implemented within the budgetry cost. All planning

must consider the limited financial and budgetry facilities. In this regard, the budgetry projection should be planned when the needs analysis has been completed. During the early part of stage 1, the projection of the budgetry planning is consistent with the objective of the overall program.

Evaluation of the management system

The overall evaluation of the program is an important activity. The fourth stage is also a stage of maturity for the program. Also, the collation of data is further intensified during this stage, and a study conducted to analyse the suitability and satisfaction of the targeted participants in the program.

All data in regard the clients that requests the services must be collated. This data incorporates types of activities, suitability of the activities, potential employers, job placement for clients that have utilized the career services, data on clients that pursue further studies, skills training and others. In this regard, the development of an information

technology system, the usage of specific software system would simplify analysis, storage and retrieval functions.

Conclusion

The proposed strategy provides a strong effect on the counselor to be constantly alert through the channels of the learning process. The educational curriculum of a guidance and counseling program, very rarely incorporates aspects of implementation, strategies, module formulation, methods in the formulation of career activities. In this regard, the counselors must be prepared to upgrade and enrich themselves through attendence at seminars, specific short term courses, workshops related with issues on career development.

The concept of integrating in a pragmatic manner the career theories emphsizing the four approaches that focus on self concept, social, personality, and trait and factor, ensures the resilience of the composite functional objective system modality. Besides ensuring an integrated approach, the systematic management also

provides a synergy in implementation of the career exploration program based on the proposed modality.

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Figure 1. Pragmatic career counseling process

Level 1	Level 2
Focus on the primary concept	Intervention, objectives and evaluation that assist the primary concept *
Personality	Self concept --> Sociological --> Trait & Factor
Self concept	Personality --> Sociological --> Trait & Factor
Sociological	Self concept --> Personality --> Trait & Factor
Trait & Factor	Sociological --> Self concept --> Personality

* Flow of the supportive activities are flexible

Figure 2. Career exploration program implementation plan

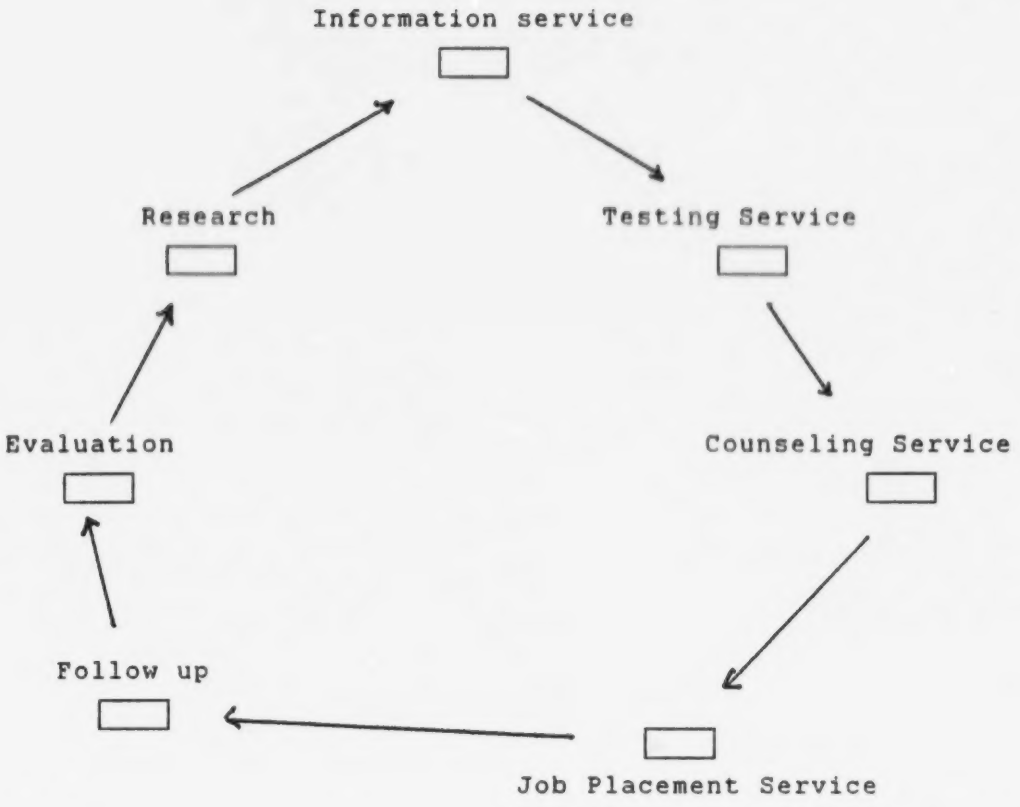

Figure 3. Definition of objectives and goal identification

Objective 1	---	Preparation & Information
Objective 2	---	Awareness activities
Objective 3	---	Evaluation of activities

Figure 4. Integration and concept consolidation stage

Stage 2

Goal identification		Career program activities	Objective	Evaluation
		Counselor preparation		Ongoing-weekly, semester, annualy
		a) Needs analysis		
		b) Skills	Current knowledge in regard state of the art career technology	
		c) Creative thinking		
		d) Module construction		
	Preparation	e) Facilitator: Cooperation		
Goal 1	&			
	Information			
		a) Target group		
		1) students 2) staff	knowledge for the target group in regard the the significance of the career exploration model	Ongoing weekly semester annualy
		b) Public relations		

(Continuation Figure 4)

Goal Identification		Career program activity	Objective	Evaluation
		Target group: Students		
		a) Career exploration workshop		
		b) Career talks	identifying	
		c) Job placement bureau	suitability of	ongoing weekly semester
		d) Job search techniques	activities	annualy
Goal 2	Awareness Activities	e) Interviewing techniques		
		f) Resume writing techniques		
		g) Information room: 1) academic 2) jobs 3) others		
		h) Self reliance workshop		
		i) Effective speaking		
		j) Social etiquette		
		Information analysis		
Goal 3	Evaluation of Activities	a) Data collation		
		b) Data analysis		
		c) Reports		